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AUTHOR Zusman, Ami
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ABSTRACT

The ways in which university system offices deal with both state policymakers and their own campuses in addressing various dilemmas (e.g. kindergarten-12 education) are discussed. Research questions addressed are: how system offices of multicampus universities deal with their campuses on matters considered relatively marginal to the campuses but important to state interests and concerns; how they respond to state threats of intrusions into university programs in areas important to state policymakers but relatively peripheral to the campus core; and how they promote efforts within the university to improve the public schools. The systemwide administrations in four public multicampus universities are examined, addressing issues of teacher education and related K-12 matters. Interviews were done with top systemwide administrators, other systemwide staff, and campus faculty and administrators concerned about teacher education and university-school relations. State, systemwide, and independent reports on the universities and their K-12 activities were examined. Results include: (1) university system administrations vary greatly in the extent to which they provide either leadership for or regulation of the campuses; (2) although still relatively low, overall system-level attention and resources devoted to K-12 concerns have increased; (3) system administrators seem readier than in the past to make system-level initiatives intended to improve teacher education or the schools; and (4) university systemwide offices can play a useful role in teacher education and K-12 reform. Figures are included. Contains 27 references. (SM)

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COORDINATING "MARGINAL" MATTERS CENTRAL TO STATE INTERESTS: UNIVERSITY SYSTEM INVOLVEMENT IN K-12 EDUCATION

Ami Zusman

Office of the President, Academic Advancement
University of California

Paper prepared for the
Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education
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Texas A&M University
Department of Educational
Administration
College Station, TX 77843
(409) 845-0393

This paper was presented at the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education held at the Ritz-Carlton, Buckhead in Atlanta, Georgia, November 2-5, 1989. This paper was reviewed by ASHE and was judged to be of high quality and of interest to others concerned with the research of higher education. It has therefore been selected to be included in the ERIC collection of ASHE conference papers.

Systemwide administrations of public multicampus universities stand, sometimes uncomfortably, between the campuses and the state. They face inward toward the campuses they coordinate and represent -- and outward toward the state government that provides their budgets and to which they must respond. Multicampus system offices are buffers and advocates for their campuses, as well as regulators and conduits of state regulations. This tension between internal and external demands and expectations creates a difficult and sometimes impossible balance (Kerr, 1984; Lee and Bowen, 1975; Newman, 1987). Indeed, Clark Kerr has suggested, "The governance of systems is one of the really sore points in American higher education; a few systems seem to exist on the verge of explosion" (Kerr, 1984, p. 71).

K-12 education provides a special challenge to the system administrations of public multicampus universities. On the one hand, public education has become a matter of central concern to state governors and legislators. Since the 1983 publication of A Nation At Risk, for example, a majority of states have undertaken major reviews of their public school systems, implemented a wide variety of reforms, and instituted an unprecedented number of new regulations on matters such as student assessment, high school graduation requirements, and teacher competency testing (Hill, 1989). Of course, public elementary and secondary education has long been subject to substantial state intervention and regulation -- a situation that reflects both the critical importance the public ascribes to mass education and public perception that schools and teachers cannot be trusted to manage education themselves (Darling-Hammond and Berry, 1988; Wise, 1979). On the other hand, within the university -- and certainly within the research university -- teacher education and other matters related to the public schools have been viewed as peripheral to the "core" arts and science disciplines, as public service (rather than research or

instruction), and as somewhat less worthy than such professions as law and medicine (Clifford and Guthrie, 1988; Glazer, 1974; Judge, 1982).

Thus, for the multicampus university system administration, always pulled between different poles, an issue like K-12 education, which is simultaneously of critical interest and concern to state policy makers and of marginal interest to most of the university community, poses a special dilemma. Other issues -- affirmative action, for example -- pose similar dilemmas. This study explores how university system offices deal with both state policy makers and their own campuses in addressing such dilemmas, and the resulting decisions and consequences. Specifically, this study addresses the following research and policy questions:

How do system offices of multicampus universities deal with their ***campuses*** *on matters considered relatively marginal to the campuses but important to state interests and concerns -- specifically, how do they coordinate and regulate campus actions in teacher education and related K-12 education areas?*

How do system offices respond to ***state*** *threats or intrusions into university programs in areas important to state policy-makers but relatively peripheral to the campus core -- specifically, academic programs for teachers and other school personnel and related K-12 education matters?*

Overall, how do multicampus university system offices promote efforts , within the university, to improve the public schools?

FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

Unlike the statewide coordinating agency, the system office clearly is part of the university. Moreover, with a few exceptions, its key officers have risen through faculty and campus administrative ranks. It is not surprising, then, that system administrators' overall perspectives and priorities reflect those of the academy -- including the value given to faculty authority over academic matters (Lee and Bowen, 1971; Lee and Bowen, 1975; Long, 1977; Peterson, 1973).

Yet, campus faculty and administrators often do not perceive system administrators as colleagues sharing the same basic perspectives. Campus administrators tend to consider system offices as another regulatory layer that increases bureaucracy, centralizes decisions that should be made on campus, decreases flexibility, and limits campus autonomy (Kauffman, 1980; Newman, 1987; O'Neill, 1974). Campus faculty, to the extent that they are aware of system office functions at all, probably view the system head as one who "directs clerical tasks and coordinates agenda, but for whom it is wholly inappropriate to attempt to exert executive authority over the campus (Pettit, 1987; p. 199). Like coordinating agencies and other intermediary organizations, system offices have little or no constituency, little visibility and identity -- and, consequently, a problem of legitimacy with the campus community and the public at large (Lee and Bowen, 1971; Pettit, 1987). Overall, campus faculty and administrators tend to view system officers as outsiders -- at best, a bureaucratic nuisance; at worst, external controllers of the campus and a conduit for state pressures.

Public university system offices <u>are</u>, of course, more susceptible and responsive to external political pressures. In this regard, they share several characteristics with

the central or head offices of public bureaucracies (Downs, 1967; Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978; Rourke, 1976; Zald, 1970): They report, directly or indirectly, to political authorities -- in the case of the public university systems, to governing boards appointed or elected by political authorities. They are responsible for securing the organization's budget from the state -- and are therefore both more aware of the organization's fiscal dependence on the state and less able to ignore state demands for accountability as a condition for continued funding. As "boundary spanners" (Thompson, 1967) between the university and the state, they interact more frequently with officials from the state as well as with other institutions, gaining a closer understanding and perhaps partial acceptance of state perspectives. Nevertheless, because many state authorities expect a level of compliance from system administrators that the latter either will not or cannot move their campuses to provide, state officials tend to see system administrators as unresponsive, obstructionist and overly protective of vested university self-interests (Lee and Bowen, 1975; Newman, 1987). In short, system offices are seen by both the campus community and state officials as representing "the other side" and consequently are subject to the resentments and pressures of both.

University system offices, as the arm of their governing boards, have significant powers to coordinate and regulate their campuses, although this varies considerably from system to system. Among other matters, system offices generally determine budget allocations to the campuses, review and approve campus academic programs, and develop systemwide policies and guidelines on academic personnel (Kerr and Gade, 1989; Lee and Bowen, 1975). Of course, campuses have a wide variety of resources to ignore, divert, reinterpret, or subvert regulatory efforts by higher levels (Downs, 1967; Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978). Equally important, the special characteristics of universities -- including a relatively flat hierarchy, collective and

thereby more ambiguous responsibility over important decisions, problematic goals, and the tradition of academic freedom -- lead to organizational structures that are more like "loosely coupled systems" (Weick, 1976) or even "organized anarchies" (Cohen and March, 1974) than like tightly controlled hierarchies.

Finally, the relationships of university systems with their state governments and campuses depend upon the importance, constraints, and histories of the particular matter under question -- in this case, teacher education and K-12 education. There is a long history of state intervention and detailed regulation of public schools and school teachers in the U.S., and the recent renewed attention to education by local, state and federal authorities has led to even greater regulation (Wise, 1988). University programs of teacher preparation have also been subject to much state regulation and oversight, although less so in the past than have K-12 schools and systems. Now, however, university system administrations are being called upon more and more to address state criticisms regarding the preparation and quality of teacher education graduates or low university involvement in improving the public schools. And yet, within the university, and certainly on research campuses, teacher education and related K-12 matters have been considered marginal matters -- as evidenced, for example, by the number of research institutions that have either closed or seriously considered closing their schools of education (Clifford and Guthrie, 1988). If university system administrators reflect the values of their campus colleagues, one would expect that system administrators would treat issues like K-12 and teacher education marginally, in terms of system-level attention, resources, or readiness to oppose external intervention.

SCOPE AND DESIGN OF THE STUDY

For this study I examined how systemwide administrations in four public multicampus universities -- the University of California (UC), the University of Missouri (UMo), the State University of New York (SUNY) and the University of North Carolina (UNC) -- address issues of teacher education and related K-12 matters. These university systems are quite diverse, ranging from UMo with four campuses to the huge SUNY system with 64 campuses. Two of these systems (UC and UMo) are relatively homogeneous systems where all the campuses are doctoral-granting (and generally research-oriented) institutions, while UNC and SUNY are more heterogeneous systems, with a mix of doctoral and four-year campuses (as well as two-year campuses within SUNY). These systems also provide a geographical spread across the U.S. However, these systems also have several characteristics in common: all either have or have had system administrations active in academic areas, all have research-oriented campuses -- which have frequently dominated system perspectives and which have typically given low attention to teacher education, and all are in states that have had governors, legislatures or other state agencies highly involved in education matters.

To answer the questions posed by the study, I conducted extended interviews with top systemwide administrators, other systemwide staff, and campus faculty and administrators concerned with matters of teacher education and university-school relations. I also examined state, systemwide and independent reports on the universities and their K-12 activities, as well as other system documents and materials.

FOUR UNIVERSITY SYSTEMS

University of California. From its flagship campus at Berkeley, UC has expanded to nine campuses across California and over 150,000 students. Although Berkeley and UCLA remain the dominant research campuses, all nine campuses are doctoral-granting institutions with strong research orientations. Within California's segmented higher education system (which UC officials helped engineer in 1960), UC is the only public doctoral-granting institution in the state -- although the comprehensive California State University system has been pressing hard in recent years for doctoral authority and has pushed UC toward developing more joint doctoral programs between the two systems. UC also has constitutional autonomy, which removes it from direct regulation by the state. There is also a strong tradition of faculty governance and of considerable campus autonomy; nevertheless, the president of the UC system is an active participant in university and state policy. All eight general campuses of UC offer postbaccalaureate teacher preparation; nevertheless, UC's role in pre-service teacher education has been small: UC credential programs prepare only about 9% of new teachers in California. (By contrast, about 65% of new teachers receive their credential preparation in programs at CSU, which has primary responsibility for teacher training in the state master plan.)

University of Missouri. UMo is the smallest university system in the study , consisting of four campuses and a little over 50,000 students. The executive order that established the present administrative structure of UMo states that "The University of Missouri is one institution," and system presidents long considered it a single, unitary institution with several locations. However, a critical systemwide report three years ago challenged that notion and, as a result, a number of previously centralized activities have been decentralized to the campuses. Like UC, UMo expanded from a

flagship campus at Columbia. Also like UC, UMo is the only public doctoral-granting institution in the state, and all its campuses are offer doctoral programs. Unlike UC, however, only Columbia has a comprehensive range of doctoral programs; the other campuses have quite differing missions and strengths. Teacher preparation is an important area at several UMo campuses; however, much of the state's teacher training takes place in other institutions in the state.

State University of New York. The largest higher education system in the U.S., SUNY has 64 campuses across New York State (outside of New York City) and 365,000 students. It also has the greatest mix of campuses in the study -- four doctoral/research-oriented campuses, comprehensive four-year campuses, and two-year community colleges. SUNY was created by the state in 1948, by consolidating existing campuses under a systemwide board and chancellor. Perhaps not surprisingly, given its enormous size, a former campus president noted that he had been president for 15 months before he received a direct call from the SUNY system chancellor (Magrath, 1977). While SUNY is a state agency, the New York State Board of Regents (and its administrative arm, the State Education Department), which coordinates education at all levels in the state, has constitutional status. According to many reports, SUNY long was hobbled by extensive bureaucratic regulation and fiscal controls exercised by the State Education Department; however, reforms initiated in 1986 decentralized some fiscal controls, providing SUNY a measure of flexibility -- and greater ability by the SUNY system to exercise authority over its own campuses. However, this decentralization comes at a time when the state's budget difficulties -- and political disagreements with the governor -- have threatened substantial cuts to SUNY's budget. Fifteen SUNY campuses offer teacher preparation; however, according to one respondent, over half of the new teachers in New York receive their credentials without having completed an approved program of teacher preparation.

University of North Carolina. UNC has 16 campuses, including doctoral-granting institutions, comprehensive four-year campuses, and historically Black institutions, and over 130,000 students. Like SUNY, UNC was created through consolidation; in fact, it was consolidated twice -- once by bringing together three research institutions and the second time (in 1971) by combining the then six-campus UNC with the state's other four-year institutions. Several of the newer campuses are now straining for research and doctoral missions, while older campuses (especially Chapel Hill) are pushing for greater autonomy from the system, which they feel is reallocating resources that otherwise would go to them. UNC provides most of the preparation for teachers in the state.

Figure 1 provides a rough comparison of the four university systems on several dimensions, from greater to lesser complexity.

FIGURE 1:

COMPARISON OF UNIVERSITY SYSTEMS

<More Complex ---------- Less Complex>

Size (# of campuses):

Large			Small
SUNY	UNC	UC	UMo

Origin of system:

Consolidated by state	Expansion of flagship
SUNY, UNC	UC, UMo

Heterogeneity (mix of campus types):

Heterogeneous		Homogeneous	
SUNY	UNC	UMo	UC

.....

University-wide involvement in teacher preparation

More			Less
UNC	SUNY	UMo	UC

FINDINGS:

I. SYSTEM-LEVEL INITIATIVES FOR K-12 REFORM

Most university initiatives intended to strengthen teacher preparation, K-12 curriculum, teachers' growth in knowledge, student preparation, school-campus partnerships and similar projects are designed by campus faculty working with the schools and school personnel, not by system administrators. Nevertheless, system offices can and sometimes do initiate systemwide, statewide or even broader projects. A few examples from the UC and UNC systems (the two universities in the study where system administrations have initiated statewide K-12-related projects):

- The UC system developed statewide subject-matter projects for K-12 teachers in writing and mathematics; it is now developing similar statewide projects in science, literature, foreign languages and other curricular areas. These projects, which have or will have 10-18 sites across the state, bring selected groups of good teachers together, where these teachers, as well as collaborating higher education faculty, teach one another new knowledge and skills in their disciplines. The idea for these projects began with an entrepreneurial faculty member at UC Berkeley, who started the Bay Area Writing Project. The UC system administration provided support and resources to expand the original project to 18 sites across the state and sought state funding to develop analogous statewide projects in other areas, on the model of the Writing Project. These projects have now been replicated across the nation as models for developing and honing teachers' subject-matter knowledge and skills. However, last year the electorate in essence reallocated state funds by guaranteeing a percentage of the state budget to the public schools and the community colleges. Consequently, additional state monies for these subject-matter projects will be funded through the

state department of education, and that agency (as well as the California State University) must approve the conditions for establishing new subject-matter projects. For 1989-90, UC is providing $2.3 million for the projects, and the state department of education will disburse an additional $5 million for UC administration of existing and new projects.

- In response to legislative calls to strengthen educator preparation, the president of the UNC system established a committee (comprised of campus administrators and school superintendents) to develop systemwide guidelines for doctoral programs for senior school administrators. The guidelines for this Ed.D. in Educational Leadership establish several innovative features. For example, although the program is designed for working professionals, students must spend at least one year of full-time study; to facilitate this, the state legislature has made available $800,000 in fellowships of up to $30,000 per student. The guidelines also require a cohort training format, a one-year administrative internship, and specific core course and research methodology requirements. The program, which will be offered at six UNC campuses (including three campuses that have not offered any doctoral programs before), will be the only UNC doctoral program approved for educational administrators. Although the program guidelines -- and the associated student support -- have been widely praised, they have also been criticized by campus administrators and faculty concerned that the system administration has inappropriately prescribed curricular requirements for campus academic programs.

- The UC system office originated a proposal for an Educational Leadership Institute to bring together leading school district superintendents and UC faculty from across the state each summer for intensive and wide-ranging discussions on schooling issues. In addition, the institute will promote collaborative research and

development projects between campus faculty and local schools and will sponsor other programs during the academic year. The institute has dual purposes: to strengthen the leadership abilities of school superintendents and to generate new approaches to address pressing school problems. After developing initial plans for the institute, the system office turned over the project to its Santa Barbara campus, which developed the project further and held the first summer program in June 1989. Through discretionary funds, the President of the UC system provided $169,000 for the institute's first year of operation, and the UC system office remains closely engaged with the campus in planning and developing the institute's activities and directions.

- The UNC system helped the Public School Forum (a non-profit organization directed toward school reform) develop the North Carolina Teaching Fellows. This program provides scholarships for four years to a select group of up to 400 entering college students interested in becoming teachers. The fellowships are linked to reforms in campus programs. Participating campuses must assign senior faculty members to work with the fellows and to provide fellows special training during their four years, including enrichment experiences in the summer, special academic year programs, and opportunities to work with local schools. The UNC system did not originate the idea for the teaching fellowship, but its support was essential in getting the proposal funded by the legislature. On the other hand, the Public School Forum, not UNC, administers the program -- reportedly to garner legislative and gubernatorial support that would not be forthcoming if UNC administered it.

Several lessons can be learned from these and other examples of system-level initiatives. Often, the projects or ideas are initiated by others (e.g., by campus faculty), but system offices may be able to extend campus programs or ideas on a much broader scale. At other times, system offices actually plan and coordinate projects

themselves. Particularly on research-oriented campuses, projects that include faculty research opportunities or research grants to work with the schools or school personnel are more likely to be successful. However, system initiatives, especially if they involve academic programs, may raise campus concerns regarding inappropriate system office regulation. Especially when budgets are tight and accountability demands high, the support (and sometimes credibility) of other institutions and organizations are essential.

II. SYSTEMS' RELATIONS WITH CAMPUSES

University system administrations vary greatly in the extent to which they provide either leadership for or regulation of the campuses. Some systemwide offices are active participants, even powerful forces, in setting systemwide agendas or initiating and implementing universitywide programs or guidelines for the preparation of K-12 educators, K-12 curricula, continuing professional development for teachers, or other activities oriented toward the schools. For example, the UNC system office largely instigated major revisions in the standards and requirements for teacher preparation, and, as noted earlier, it guided the development of a new doctoral program for school administrators. Attention to K-12 matters within UNC is high: according to respondents, UNC has been involved in a major report or reform effort involving the public schools for each of the last 10 years and has allocated about $30 million in additional funds to K-12 initiatives. By contrast, other system offices (for example, the UMo system) have devoted little system-level attention or resources to K-12 education (although the UMo system office has supported campus initiatives in teacher education or K-12, in its state budget requests). The SUNY system office has played an intermediate role; although it has

not developed major systemwide directions or initiatives, it established a Chancellor's Task Force on Teacher Education, for example, and has at times reallocated SUNY funds to support a teacher education initiative or need. Figure 2 suggests roughly the extent of system office involvement and initiative in K-12 issues for the systems in the study.

FIGURE 2:

SYSTEM OFFICE INITIATIVE IN K-12

Why these differences? What seems to be most crucial is the system office's overall powers and expectations. For example, UC's system office is in general a very active player in both external and internal university affairs. Thus, even though teacher education and K-12 matters are relatively marginal within UC, the UC system office plays a relatively major role in K-12, compared to systems like SUNY or UMo. By contrast, the UMo system office has a very small professional staff, and the system office has responded to a recent report that urged greater decentralization of activities from the system office to the campuses by reducing some system-level programs and functions. At the opposite extreme, the SUNY system's huge size may prevent it from being much more than a "loose confederation." Another major factor is the state's budgetary situation. Both UMo and SUNY have had difficulty maintaining adequate funding because of budget crises in Missouri and New York, accompanied by state officials' press toward increased accountability by higher education institutions. In such situations, the only ways systems can support new initiatives are through unlikely

extramural funding or politically difficult reallocation of funds. However, these factors do not fully explain why overall system office roles vary so much. For example, size does not seem to prevent the New York State Education Department from exercising regulatory powers over SUNY and its campuses. Also, the UNC system office has a much more explicit, extensive -- and regulatory -- role in the field of education than it has in any other academic area.

Although still relatively low overall, system-level attention and resources devoted to K-12 concerns have increased in the past half dozen years, reflecting increased state and nationwide attention to public schooling and teacher preparation. All four systems have undertaken systemwide reviews of education programs, teacher education, relations with the schools, or related areas in the last few years; it is doubtful that any other single academic area has been subject to as much systemwide scrutiny. Three systems (UC, UNC and SUNY) now have top-level administrators who have been assigned coordination of university efforts in teacher education or improvement of the schools as a major job responsibility. And, as noted, at least two systems (UC and UNC) have implemented new university-wide or statewide initiatives with substantial state funds. Given the marginal status of teacher education and K-12 issues on many of these systems' campuses, funding and attention were greater than I expected.

Nevertheless, system offices' ability and willingness to regulate campus programs or to initiate reforms themselves are constrained by traditions of campus and faculty autonomy in academic matters, limited resources, and continued ambivalence over the importance of K-12 issues to the university. In some university systems, system-level attention to K-12 issues appears to rest somewhat tenuously upon the continued presence of a particular administrator. Moreover, some K-12-related

activities (e.g., programs of continuing professional development for school personnel) may be relegated to peripheral units outside the primary chain of command. **In this environment, system administrators responsible for K-12 matters typically view themselves not as regulators -- but as education advocates, catalysts for campus reforms, liaisons, buffers, and builders or synthesizers of consensus.** For example, administrators in some systems clearly act as advocates for education both within their university and with the state. A UC administrator also spoke of his office's role as a catalyst in promoting a network of programs across the state designed to improve teachers' understanding of science. System offices may provide grants or develop system-level budget proposals to support campus activities, serve as liaisons among the campuses and between campuses and state agencies, and coordinate a unified response to major legislative bills that threaten academic autonomy.

On the other hand, **many campus faculty and administrators regard system initiatives, coordination, and information requests with resentment and suspicion.** They are likely to see the system office quite differently than do system administrators -- describing it as "intrusive," "irrelevant," "a bureaucratic nuisance," "a slow battleship" that takes miles to make a turn. Information requests are numerous, usually immediate, and often have no apparent purpose or pay-off for the campus. Campus administrators face conflicting signals from different units within the system office (and, said one dean, sometimes even from the same system administrator). Communication often seems to be one-way; one dean asserted that the system office convened education deans to inform them of system interests "and sometimes to give us orders ... and, yes, occasionally they listen to our concerns as well." Two education deans charged their respective system offices with trying to create a "super school of education" over the campus schools. Yet it is important to

note that **campus perspectives differ** not only between systems but within systems as well. Newer, smaller or less research-oriented campuses were more favorably inclined toward the system (even though they still had complaints). This suggests that weaker interests (e.g., newer or smaller campuses), which are more dependent upon the system administration, may see the system office as a protector of their interests or as leverage for change their status.

Reality seems to be somewhere in between these system and campus views. System offices clearly do at times regulate and standardize campus education programs, students and activities. For example, the UNC system (the most regulatory of the four systems, at least in education) mandated that teacher education students take a second major in an academic area; and the UC system required that all credential students be reclassified as undergraduates, even though they were postbaccalaureate students and despite campus concerns that this would send the wrong message regarding the status of teacher education.

System administrators have adopted a number of strategies to deal with campus distrust and limited system ability to implement changes or controls over unwilling campus actors. These include: **1) consensus-building, 2) coopting campus players, 3) defining issues, and 4) advocacy of campus programs.** 1) Consensus building: System staff seek both to identify and to build consensus on education issues among campus actors. One means to do this is to increase networking among campuses, as well as between system and campuses (for example, through meetings of education deans). This helps create a sense of a universitywide identity and a united front against, e.g., external interventions. It may also empower campus groups that had not previously met together, so that they become a force independent of the system office -- as appears to be happening with

teacher education directors in UC. 2) Cooptation: The process of consensus-building requires extensive consultation with campus personnel, as well as the inclusion of campus faculty and administrators on systemwide committees and as university representatives to other institutions or state agencies. As Selznick (1949) notes, by including campus participants, this process tends to coopt both campus and system actors into the other's perspectives. The system-appointed faculty task force may be particularly effective in this regard. According to one campus dean, system administrations use such task forces as "legitimizing vehicles" to legitimize what the system offices want to do -- for example, to institute systemwide curricular requirements for Ed.D. programs in UNC or to require credential candidates to complete an academic major or concentration in SUNY. 3) Definition of issues: System offices control information and define what is important by setting meeting agendas and by requesting and disseminating specific information. 4) Advocacy: Finally, system administrators build trust and increase their ability to coordinate by providing things that campus participants want -- funds for their projects, advocacy of their programs with other system and campus officials, networking with important university and external actors, and communication of needed information. In turn, these actions may generate campus-level support for K-12 oriented system staff and units within the larger system office.

III. SYSTEM RESPONSES TO THE STATE

State policy makers' concern with the quality of public schooling -- and, by extension, with teacher preparation and other academic matters -- presents a real threat to university academic autonomy. Although intrusions into university affairs by state policy-makers or regulatory agencies to date have not been as great as might be

expected, some significant state incursions affecting such academic concerns as who will teach and what will be taught have occurred -- and, if the public focus on education remains, they are likely to increase. For example, state legislatures in both California and North Carolina have enacted measures requiring university faculty who teach credential courses to "participate" regularly in the public schools -- a state intrusion into faculty performance that universities would be unlikely to tolerate in most other areas. State policy makers have often used budget cuts, threatened cuts, or reallocations among campuses as a tool to obtain university changes, as governors in both New York and Missouri have done. In many states, state education departments or state teacher credentialing and program review boards have enacted a myriad of detailed, prescriptive regulations over university credential programs. Often, it is the university's governing board that is the primary and proximate source of intrusion into academic matters, as has been the case at both UNC and UMo.

In response to these state pressures, system administrators appear readier than in the past to make system-level initiatives intended to improve teacher education or the schools. System administrators also are readier than they might be in "core" academic areas to "give in" a bit to state demands for meeting the schools' needs. Systems set priorities and use their bargaining chips sparingly. So system offices are reluctant to anger legislators -- and perhaps threaten the university's overall budget -- by opposing what are seen as less central university matters like teaching credential programs. For example, in 1983, largely because high-level administrators paid little attention to K-12 matters, the UC system let pass a measure that required university faculty teaching credential courses to participate in the schools. In 1989, increased system attention to K-12 and teacher education matters led the UC system office to sponsor a bill to limit the scope of the original legislation -- but, in doing so, the system office accepted the

legislature's right to set conditions for credential faculty. In addition, the decision-making rules that university systems use to decide how to respond to the state are sometimes inappropriate for areas like teacher preparation, where the state sets licensing requirements. Thus, while the university may oppose state measures that directly regulate university professional programs, it may decline to oppose state licensing requirements that regulate individuals' entrance into the profession; yet such licensing regulations may just as effectively, if indirectly, regulate academic programs that need to ensure that their graduates become licensed. Sometimes system offices' attention to larger political agendas puts them at cross purposes with campus faculty interests; for instance, despite objections from many education faculty, one system office exercised considerable pressure on campuses to develop joint programs in education with other institutions, in order to ward off claims by those institutions for doctoral authority.

Nevertheless, **system offices do adopt strategies and responses to seek to limit state intrusions into university K-12 activities, particularly academic programs in this area.** For example, system offices anticipate state demands and respond "voluntarily" before threatened state legislation or regulations can be enacted. System offices also redefine and reshape state regulations or pressures to make them compatible with the university's own interests. For example, in response to legislative pressures for strengthening teacher education, the SUNY system established a task force that developed a series of recommendations in line with ways that system and campus administrations wanted to change teacher education. System offices join with other education institutions to present a united posture or response -- e.g., through "joint committees" with state departments of education or "intersegmental coordinating councils" with other higher education institutions, to respond to legislative pressure on such matters as teacher quality and

preparation and access to higher education. However, while such strategies permit institutions to combine forces, this strategy runs the risk of subsuming institutional priorities to those of the larger interinstitutional entity. On occasion, system offices do flatly oppose a measure that might prove to be an important precedent for state incursions in other areas.

POLICY AND RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

System role in K-12 reform. Despite their problems, university systemwide offices can play a useful role in teacher education and K-12 reform. In particular, system offices can bring a broader perspective than campuses on the overall needs of the campuses and the state as a whole. In this regard, system offices and system chief executives may be especially important in exercising leadership on matters of public importance but which typically have weak constituents on the campuses -- e.g., teacher education or affirmative action. This requires taking stands. To succeed, however, systems also must make their efforts congruent with the campus environment -- both by orienting projects to campus values (e.g., by supporting faculty to do practice-oriented research on the schools) and by using the influence of the system president to broaden reward structures for faculty appointments and promotions to include more attention to work with the schools.

Threats to institutional autonomy. On the other hand, when university systemwide offices "give in" to state intrusions into areas like teacher education, these decisions may set a precedent for state intrusions in other professional or academic areas within the university. Newman (1987, p.33) warns that "the evidence indicates that, over time, the interactions on peripheral issues will ultimately affect the nature of

the university's core." Moreover, when the system office does not act (whether in K-12 or in other areas), other more political actors may step in to fill the vacuum -- as may be happening with the growing importance of the Missouri Coordinating Board for Higher Education.

Knowledge gap. Over half of all U.S. higher education students are enrolled in public multicampus institutions (Kerr and Gade, 1989). Multicampus systems include many of the nation's most prestigious and powerful campuses. Yet, in conducting this study, I found that we know relatively little about multicampus systems or their presidents. For example, most studies of college and university leadership examine only campus leaders. Since Lee and Bowen's seminal 1971 and 1975 studies, there has been little comprehensive examination of the roles of system leaders and the functions or dysfunctions of systemwide administrations. What recent attention has been given to systems is generally only in passing. It is true, of course, that system offices and executives differ widely, and some may be, as Pettit (1987) notes, no more than technocrats and clerks. Yet others clearly play a much more influential role. We need more careful research to fill this void.

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